CLAIMS

1. An assembly comprising:

a device constructed in a form factor of a PCMCIA card, the device having an interface to communicate with a storage card and memory to store user data; and

a removable storage card associated with a user that alternately enables access to the user data on the memory when interfaced with the device interface and disables access to the user data when removed from the device.

2. An assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the storage card comprises a smart card.

3. An assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the memory comprises flash memory.

4. An assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the device stores a user's profile that can be used to configure a computer.

5. An assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the storage card stores a passcode and access to the user data in the memory of the device is enabled upon authentication of a user-supplied passcode to the passcode stored on the storage card.

6. An assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein the device stores a public key and the storage card stores a corresponding private key and access to the user data in the memory of the device is enabled upon verification that the public key and the private key are associated.

7. A profile carrier comprising:

a storage card to store a passcode associated with a user;

a PCMCIA device constructed in a form factor of a PCMCIA card, the PCMCIA device having an interface to communicate with the storage card and a memory to store a profile of the user; and

wherein the assembly permits access to the user profile in the memory of the PCMCIA device upon authentication of the user at the storage card via passcode verification.

8. A profile carrier as recited in claim 7, wherein the storage card comprises a smart card.

9. A profile carrier as recited in claim 7, wherein the memory comprises flash memory.

10. A profile carrier as recited in claim 7, wherein the PCMCIA device also stores data files.

11. A profile carrier as recited in claim 7, wherein the PCMCIA device stores a public key and the storage card stores a corresponding private key, and the assembly permits access to the user profile in the memory of the PCMCIA device upon verification that the public key and the private key are associated.

12. An assembly comprising:

a smart card to store a passcode and a private key from a private/public key pair;

a PCMCIA device constructed in a form factor of a PCMCIA card, the PCMCIA device having an interface to communicate with the smart card and flash memory to store user data and a public key from the private/public key pair;

the smart card being configured to permit use of the private key following validation of a user-entered passcode with the stored passcode;

the smart card being further configured to authenticate the public key stored on the memory of the PCMCIA device using the private key; and

the PCMCIA device being configured to permit access to the user data stored on the memory upon successful authentication of the public key at the smart card.

13. An assembly as recited in claim 12, wherein the PCMCIA device also stores a user profile for use in configuring a computer.

14. A device comprising:

a card reader constructed in a form factor of a PCMCIA card, the card reader being configured to read information from a storage card;

data memory resident in the card reader to store user data; and

a controller resident in the card reader to enable access to the user data in the data memory in response to the card reader receiving access enabling information from a storage card.

15. A device as recited in claim 14, wherein the data memory comprises flash memory.

16. A device as recited in claim 14, wherein the data memory stores a user profile for use in configuring a computer.

17. An assembly, comprising:

the device as recited in claim 14; and

a storage card that can be alternately interfaced with the card reader and removed from the card reader.

18. A computer system, comprising:

a computer having a PCMCIA device reader; and

the assembly as recited in claim 17, wherein the assembly is interfaced with the computer via the PCMCIA device reader so that the computer can access the user data on the device.

19. A PCMCIA smart card reader comprising flash memory.

20. An assembly, comprising:

the PCMCIA smart card reader as recited in claim 19; and

a smart card that can be alternately interfaced with the smart card reader and removed from the smart card reader.

21. A computer system, comprising:

a computer having a PCMCIA device reader; and

the assembly as recited in claim 20, wherein the assembly is interfaced with the computer via the PCMCIA device reader.

22. A computer system, comprising:

a computer having a PCMCIA device reader; and

a smart card secured memory assembly having a form factor of a PCMCIA card to compatibly interface with the PCMCIA device reader in the computer, the smart card secured memory assembly having data memory to store user data and a removable smart card that alternately enables access to the user data when present and disables access to the user data when removed.

23. A computer system as recited in claim 22, wherein the data memory comprises flash memory.

24. A computer system as recited in claim 22, wherein the smart card stores a passcode and is configured to authenticate a user-supplied passcode entered into the computer as a condition for enabling access to the user data.

25. A computer system as recited in claim 22, wherein:

the smart card stores a first key;

the data memory stores a second key that is associated with the first key; and

the smart card is configured to authenticate the second key from the data memory using the first key as a condition for enabling access to the user data.

26. A computer system as recited in claim 22, wherein:

the smart card stores a passcode and a private key of a public/private key pair;

the data memory stores a public key of the public/private key pair; and

the smart card is configured to authenticate a user-supplied passcode entered into the computer as a condition for enabling access to the private key and to authenticate the public key from the data memory using the private key as a condition for enabling access to the user data.

27. A computer system, comprising:

a computer having a PCMCIA device reader;

a portable profile carrier to port a user's profile for configuration of the computer, the profile carrier having a form factor of a PCMCIA card to compatibly interface with the PCMCIA device reader in the computer, the profile carrier comprising:

(a) a storage card associated with the user;

(b) a storage card reader having an interface to communicate with the storage card and data memory to store the user's profile, the storage

card enabling access to the user data on the data memory of the storage card reader;

wherein when the profile carrier is interfaced with the computer via the PCMCIA device reader, the user's profile is accessible to configure the computer.

28. A computer system as recited in claim 27, wherein the data memory comprises flash memory.

29. A computer system as recited in claim 27, wherein the storage card comprises a smart card.

30. A computer system as recited in claim 29, wherein the smart card stores a passcode and is configured to authenticate a user-supplied passcode entered into the computer as a condition for enabling access to the user's profile.

31. A computer system as recited in claim 29, wherein:

the smart card stores a first key;

the storage card reader stores a second key that is associated with the first key; and

the smart card is configured to authenticate the second key passed in from the storage card reader using the first key as a condition for enabling access to the user's profile.

32. A computer system as recited in claim 29, wherein:

the smart card stores a passcode and a private key of a public/private key pair;

the storage card reader stores a public key of the public/private key pair; and

the smart card is configured to authenticate a user-supplied passcode entered into the computer as a condition for enabling access to the private key and to authenticate the public key passed in from the storage card reader using the private key as a condition for enabling access to the user's profile.

33. A method for porting a user profile for a computer, comprising:

storing a user profile in data memory of a card secured profile carrier, the card secured profile carrier having a reader component with a form factor of a PCMCIA card that is equipped with the data memory and a card component that selectively enables access to the user profile in the data memory when interfaced with the reader component;

interfacing the card component with the reader component to form the card secured profile carrier;

interfacing the card secured profile carrier with the computer; and

reading the user profile from the data memory for use in configuring the computer.

34. A method as recited in claim 33, further comprising interfacing the card secured profile carrier with a different second computer and reading the user profile from the data memory for use in configuring the second computer.

35. A method comprising:

storing user data in a card reader;

storing access credentials on a storage card, the access credentials enabling access to the user data stored on the card reader;

interfacing the storage card with the card reader; and

reading the access credentials from the storage card to enable access to the user data.

36. A method comprising:

storing user data in memory installed in a card reader;

storing a reader-resident key in the memory of the card reader;

storing a card-resident key on an IC (integrated circuit) card, the card-resident key corresponding to the reader-resident key;

storing a passcode on the IC card;

interfacing the IC card with the card reader;

receiving a user-entered passcode;

permitting use of the card-resident key following validation of the user-entered passcode with the passcode stored on the IC card;

passing the reader-resident key from the card reader to the IC card;

authenticating, at the IC card, the reader-resident key using the card-resident key; and

permitting access to the user data stored in the memory of the card reader upon successful authentication of the reader-resident key.

37. In a system having a computer with a PCMCIA device reader and a smart card secured profile carrier having a form factor of a PCMCIA card to compatibly interface with the PCMCIA device reader in the computer, the smart card secured profile carrier having memory to store a user profile and a removable smart card, computer-readable media resident on the profile carrier having executable instructions comprising:

receiving a user-supplied passcode from the computer;

authenticating the user-supplied passcode with a passcode stored on the profile carrier;

enabling access to a private key on the profile carrier upon successful authentication of the user-supplied passcode;

authenticating a public key associated with the memory using the private key; and

enabling access to the user profile in the memory upon successful authentication of the public key.

38. In a system having a computer with a PCMCIA device reader and a smart card secured profile carrier having a form factor of a PCMCIA card to compatibly interface with the PCMCIA device reader in the computer, the smart card secured profile carrier having memory to store a user profile and a removable smart card, computer-readable media at the smart card having executable instructions comprising:

receiving a user-supplied passcode from the computer;

authenticating the user-supplied passcode with a passcode stored on the smart card;

enabling access to a private key on the smart card upon successful authentication of the user-supplied passcode;

receiving a public key from the memory;

authenticating the public key using the private key; and

enabling access to the user profile in the memory of the profile carrier upon successful authentication of the public key.